

Social Cleavages and Party Systems

A **political party** can be thought of as a group of people that includes those who hold office and those who help get and keep them there.

Political parties serve four main purposes:

1. Structure the political world
2. Recruitment and socialization of political elite
3. Mobilization of the masses
4. The link between rulers and the ruled

A **nonpartisan democracy** is a democracy with no official political parties.

A **single-party system** is one in which only one political party is legally allowed to hold power.

A **one-party dominant system** is one in which multiple parties may legally operate but in which only one particular party has a realistic chance of gaining power.

A **two-party system** is one in which only two major political parties have a realistic chance of holding power.

A **multiparty system** is one in which more than two parties have a realistic chance of holding power.

The **effective number of parties** is a measure that captures both the number and the size of parties in a country.

The measure weights larger parties greater than smaller parties.

The **effective number of electoral parties** is a measure of the number of parties that win votes: $\frac{1}{\sum v_i^2}$.

The **effective number of legislative parties** is a measure of the number of parties that win seats: $\frac{1}{\sum s_i^2}$.

Why are some party systems divided primarily along ethnic lines, while others are divided mainly along class, religious, linguistic, or regional ones?

One of the roles of parties is to represent social cleavages.

- Urban-rural cleavage
- Confessional cleavage
- Secular-clerical cleavage
- Class cleavage
- Post-materialist cleavage
- Ethnic and linguistic cleavages

Individuals have a repertoire of **attributes** – religion, language, class, gender etc. – that makes them eligible for membership in some **identity category**.

An **attribute** is a characteristic that qualifies an individual for membership in an identity category.

- Attributes are given and self-evident.

An **identity category** is a social group in which an individual can place herself.

- Identity categories are socially constructed.

TABLE 14.4**Individual Attributes and Possible Attribute Values**

Attribute	Possible attribute values
Class	Worker, bourgeoisie
Skin color	Black, white
Nationality	English, American, Nigerian
Profession	Political scientist, plumber, doctor
Region	North, south, east, west
Origin	Foreign, native
Height	Tall, short

TABLE 14.5**Attributes and Possible Combinations of Attributes
in a Hypothetical Country**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	a	b
Southerner	c	d

TABLE 14.6**Potential Identity Categories in a Hypothetical Country**

Potential identity category	Size
Northerner	$a + b$
Southerner	$c + d$
French speaker	$a + c$
Dutch speaker	$b + d$
Northerner and French speaker	a
Northerner and Dutch speaker	b
Southerner and French speaker	c
Southerner and Dutch speaker	d
Everyone	$a + b + c + d$

How attributes map onto actual identity categories depends on the distribution and correlation of those attributes.

A country with uncorrelated attributes has **cross-cutting attributes** (cleavages).

A country with correlated attributes has **reinforcing attributes** (cleavages).

TABLE 14.7**Cross-Cutting Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.25	0.25
Southerner	0.25	0.25

North vs. South and French-speaking vs. Dutch-speaking are as equally likely to be activated as French-speaking Northerner, Dutch-speaking Northerner, French-speaking Southerner, or Dutch-speaking Southerner.

TABLE 14.8**Reinforcing Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.03	0.57
Southerner	0.36	0.04

The identity categories that are likely to be activated are Dutch-speaking Northerners and French-speaking Southerners.

Electoral rules also influence which cleavages become politicized.

TABLE 14.9

A Hypothetical Distribution of Attributes

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.40	0.10
Southerner	0.40	0.10

Country A: Gaining national office requires 50% of the vote.

Country B: Gaining national office requires 60% of the vote.

TABLE 14.9 A Hypothetical Distribution of Attributes

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.40	0.10
Southerner	0.40	0.10

Country A: North vs. South (regional cleavage).

Country B: French vs. Dutch (linguistic cleavage).

The distribution of cleavages also matters.

TABLE 14.10

An Alternative Hypothetical Distribution
of Attributes

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.25	0.35
Southerner	0.25	0.15

Country C: Gaining national office requires 60% of the vote.

Country D: Gaining national office requires 60% of the vote.

TABLE 14.10**An Alternative Hypothetical Distribution
of Attributes**

	French speaker	Dutch speaker
Northerner	0.25	0.35
Southerner	0.25	0.15

Country C: French vs. Dutch (linguistic cleavage).

Country B: North vs. South (regional cleavage).

$\frac{2}{3}$ of Chewas and Tumbukas live in Malawi, and $\frac{1}{3}$ live in Zambia.

Puzzle:

- **Malawi:** Chewas and Tumbukas are arch political enemies.
- **Zambia:** Chewas and Tumbukas are political allies.



There are recognizable cultural differences between Chewas and Tumbukas.

- Chewas speak Chichewa, while Tumbukas speak Chitumbuka.
- Chewas dance nyau, while Tumbukas dance vinbuza.
- Chewa parents want a chicken for their daughter, while Tumbuka parents want seven cows.

Would a member of your ethnic group vote for a presidential candidate from the other ethnic group?

- Zambia: 21% said “No”.
- Malawi: 61% said “No”.

Would you marry a member from the other ethnic group?

- Zambia: 24% said “No”.
- Malawi: 55% said “No”.

Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and enemies in Malawi.

Why?

The two countries employ the same electoral system – SMDP.

They have both had similar party systems.

They are both former British colonies.

Malawi

- Chewas (57%) and Tumbukas (12%).
- Given their size and electoral system, it makes sense to politicize the Chewa-Tumbuka division.
- Malawi Congress Party (MCP) is seen as the Chewa party.
- Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) is seen as the Tumbuka party.

Zambia

- Chewas (7%) and Tumbukas (4%).
- Given their size and electoral system, it does not make sense to politicize the Chews-Tumbuka division.
- The division is between the Easterners (Chewas and Tumbukas), Northerners, Westerners, and Southerners.
- Chewas and Tumbukas have to work together if they hope to win political power.

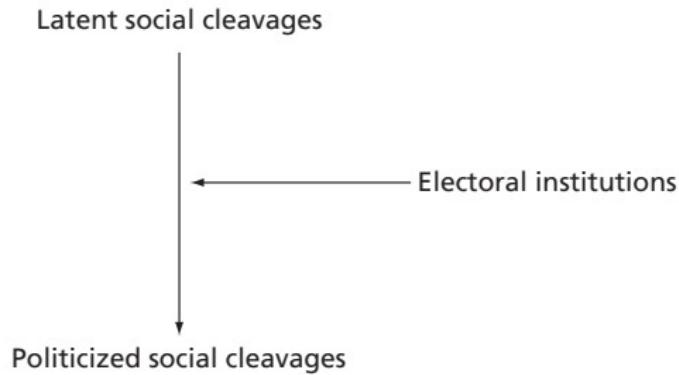
The logic of political competition focuses voter and elite attention on some cleavages and not others.

Politicians seek to build winning political coalitions.

Not all cultural and ethnic divisions become politicized.

FIGURE 14.1

Politicized Cleavages and the Role of Electoral Institutions



Why do some countries have many parties and others have few?

Duverger's Theory

- Social divisions are the primary driving force behind the formation of parties.
- Electoral institutions influence how social divisions are translated into political parties.

Social cleavages matter.

The more social cleavages there are and the more that these cleavages are cross-cutting, the greater the demand for distinctive representation and the greater the demand for political parties.

TABLE 14.11**The Distribution of Identity Attributes in Hypothetical Country A (Percentages)**

European		Indigenous			
	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Total
Rich	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	50.0
Poor	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	50.0
Total	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	

TABLE 14.12**The Distribution of Identity Attributes in Hypothetical Country B (Percentages)**

		European		Indigenous		Total
		Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	
Rich	Catholic	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0
	Protestant	0.0	25.0	0.0	25.0	50.0
Total	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0		

Electoral institutions matter.

- Social cleavages create the demand for political parties.
- But electoral institutions determine whether this *latent* demand for representation leads to the existence of new parties.
- Specifically, non-proportional or non-permissive electoral systems act as a brake on the tendency for social cleavages to be translated into new parties.

Mechanical effect of electoral laws.

- The mechanical effect of electoral laws refers to the way votes are translated into seats.
- When electoral systems are disproportional, the mechanical effect punishes small parties and rewards large parties.

FIGURE 14.2

Duvergerland: A Hypothetical Country Using an SMDP Electoral System

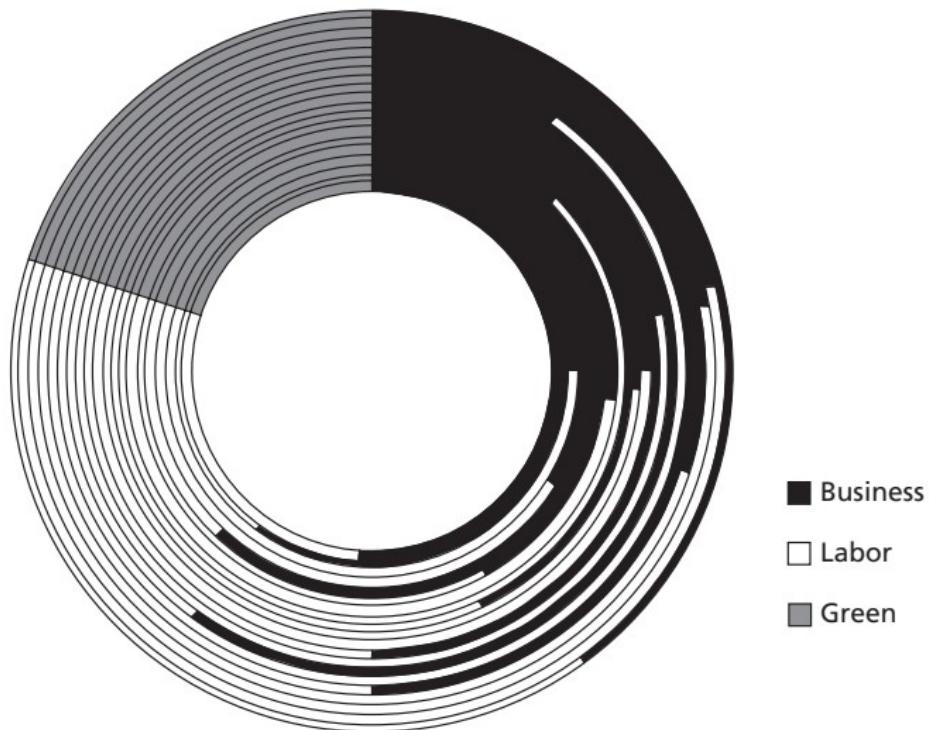
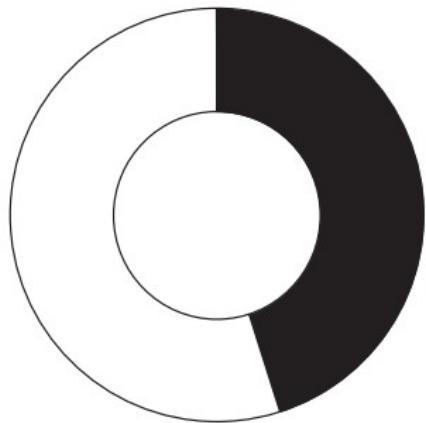


FIGURE 14.3

Distribution of Seats in Duvergerland under SMDP and PR Electoral Rules

a. SMDP



b. PR



- Business
- Labor
- Green

TABLE 14.13**Legislative Elections Results, St. Ives Constituency,
United Kingdom, 1992**

	Votes	% of Vote
David Harris (Conservative)	24,528	42.9
Andrew George (Liberal Democrat)	22,883	40.1
Stephen Warr (Labour)	9,144	16.0
Graham Stevens (Liberal)	577	1.0
Harris is elected		

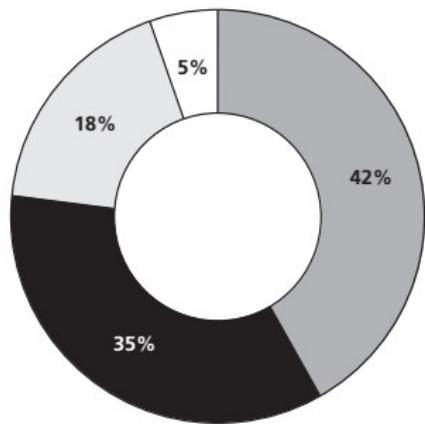
TABLE 14.14**Legislative Elections Results, National Totals, United Kingdom, 1992 (Percentages)**

	Votes	Seats
Conservative	41.9	51.6
Labour	34.9	41.6
Liberal Democrats	17.8	3.1
Others	5.4	3.7
Total	100	100

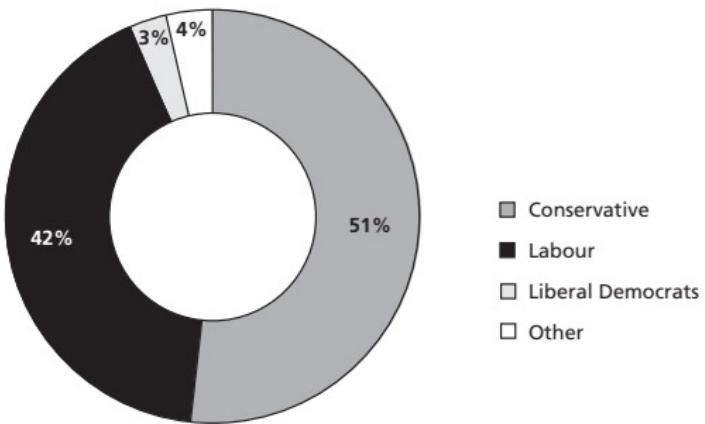
FIGURE 14.4

Distribution of Votes and Seats in Legislative Elections in the United Kingdom, 1992

Distribution of votes



Distribution of seats



Strategic effect of electoral laws.

- The strategic effect of electoral laws refers to how the way in which votes are translated into seats influences the 'strategic' behavior of voters and political elites.

When electoral systems are disproportional, their mechanical effect can be expected to punish small parties and reward large parties.

As a result, voters have an incentive to engage in **strategic voting** and political elites have an incentive to engage in **strategic entry**.

Strategic effect of electoral laws.

1. **Strategic voting** essentially means voting for your most preferred candidate or party that has a realistic chance of winning.
2. **Strategic entry** refers to the decision by political elites about whether to enter the political scene under the label of their most preferred party or under the label of their most preferred party that has a realistic chance of winning.

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Preference ordering: Labour > Liberal Democrat > Conservative

- Sincere voting: Labour
- Strategic voting: Liberal Democrat

Imagine that you are an aspiring political entrepreneur who has an interest in environmental politics.

If you lived in Duvergerland, which party would you join – greens, labor, or business?

Imagine that you are an aspiring political entrepreneur who has an interest in environmental politics.

If you lived in Duvergerland, which party would you join – greens, labor, or business?

Strategic entry means that small parties are less likely to attract high-quality candidates and funding, or even form in the first place, in a disproportional country.

FIGURE 14.6

Party Systems: Social Cleavages and the Modifying Effect of Electoral Institutions

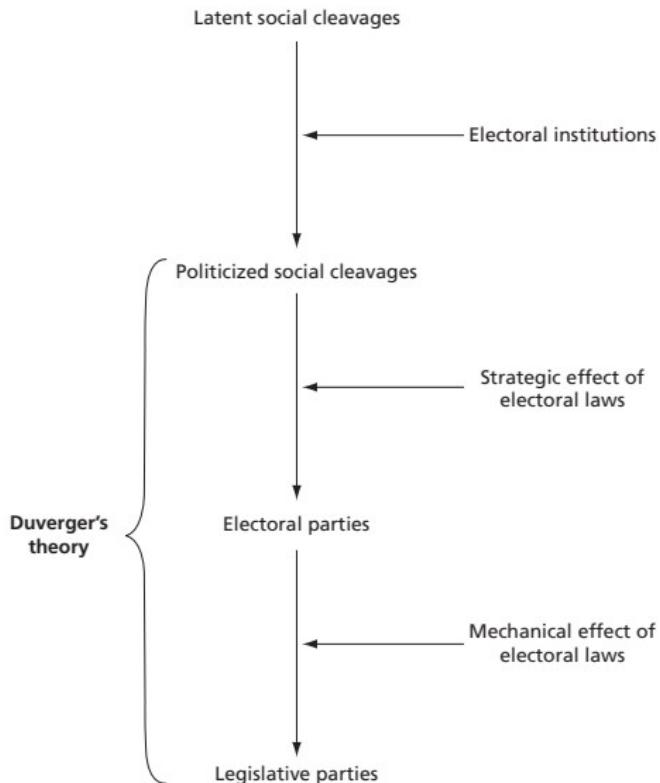


TABLE 14.15**The Interplay of Social Heterogeneity and Electoral System Permissiveness on Party System Size**

		Electoral System Permissiveness	
		Low (SMDP)	High (PR)
Social Heterogeneity	High	Few parties	Many parties
	Low	Few parties	Few parties

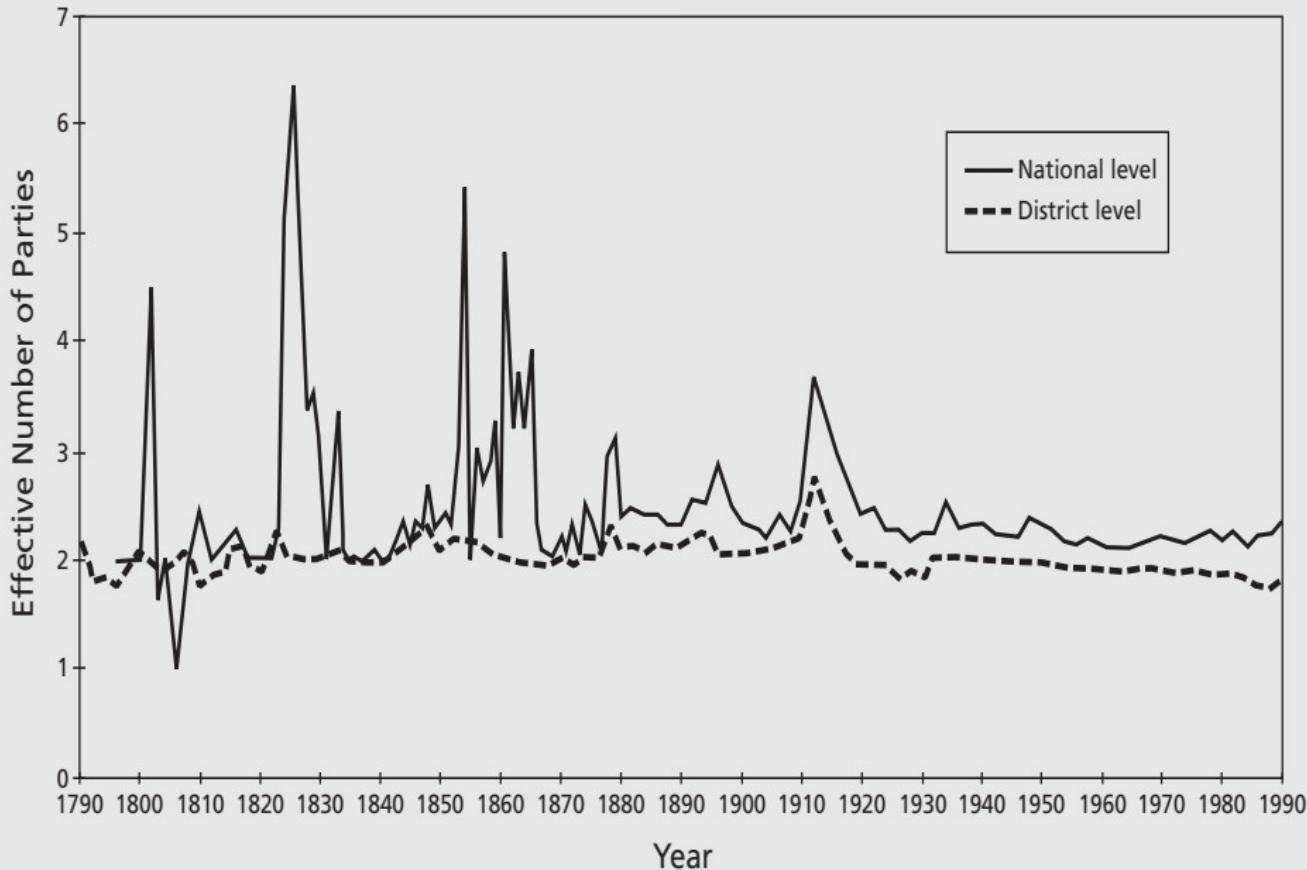
Technically, Duverger's theory only holds at the district level.

In effect, there can be more parties competing nationally than there are, on average, competing in each district.

A party system is **nationalized** if the local and national party systems are of similar size.

FIGURE 14.7

Number of Parties at the National and District Levels in the United States, 1790–1990



What explains the nationalization of party systems?

- Fiscal centralization.
- Political centralization.
- Concurrent presidential elections.
- National cleavage patterns.